

NEWS LETTER

Otahuhu Community Baptist Church

Knowing Christ - Growing in Christ - Going with Christ

TAKE NOTE:

6th September 2020

PAINTING COMPETITION

For this first time at church, a Painting Competition has been organised for children of OCBC. Themes: "Creation" - upto 10 years and "Life" - from 10 - 25 years.

13th September 2020

MISSION SUNDAY

All three congregations, will observe Missions Sunday on the second Sunday of every month.

WEEKLY HOMEGROUPS

Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

In all three congregations, there are Bible Study Groups and Prayer Groups meeting on weekdays. Please check with your respective pastors.

2020 TARGET: Praying for , 50 Born Again Experiences, 200 Witnessing's

STRUCK DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED

What a month of August it has been! The news came like a flash altering our lifestyles again within minutes. We went into a second lockdown. But, even at this time, we trust in God alone. There is a cry within about when this will be all over. But again what we need is patience. According to the Scriptures, "We may be hard pressed on every side, but we are not crushed,... struck down, but not destroyed (1 Cor 4: 8-9). We will find comfort in our Lord our Maker. His plans will come to pass, only if you are patient and keep trusting in Him at all times.

CHURCH AGM : By the grace of God, our Church AGM went well and before the AGM all the congregations came together for a blessed Combined Service. It was a joy to be together again.



NEW MEMBERSHIP : Two new families became members of the OCBC Church family. The Ernest's and The Ragulan's. Welcome them and uphold them in prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FASTING PRAYER MEETING -
Friday, 4th September from 8pm-10pm on Zoom

COMMUNION SUNDAY: Sunday, 6th September - in all three Services.

DURING LOCKDOWN: All Church Ministries will be through Zoom till we go down to Level 1. All members are requested to take precaution and be safe when you are out and about.

PRAYER NEEDS

PRAY FOR

- Pray for the peace of God to dwell in all at this time .
- Pray for God to lift up the spirits of people when they are frustrated and find themselves in hopeless situations
- Pray for people to find jobs even in tough times
- Pray for pastors, missionaries and evangelists working hard in the midst of this pandemic.
- Pray for people to trust in God at this time and depend on Him alone.
- Pray for your friends who are in distress and name them before God in your prayers
- Pray for parents, elderly and those who are vulnerable to infectious viruses and diseases.

VERSE FOR THE MONTH

Psalm 27: 5

"For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling."

MISSIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE: from Rachel Jacob

The Missions Committee met on Friday, 21st August over Zoom to discuss our plans for this coming year. We are in the midst of planning for new local missions and are looking forward to engaging with the Otahuhu Community. The grand total amount for Self Denial was \$3510.60/-. Thank you to all the kids and members who participated and helped fundraise.

CELL GROUPS AND BIBLE STUDIES

The Cell Groups and Bible Studies will continue. The English meet for their Bible Studies at Mears Room on Wednesdays. Tamil Cell Group meets online on Zoom. The Chinese meet on Fridays for their Bible Studies. Please do tune in on Zoom if you are unable to go to a meeting physically.

CHURCH HEALTH:

We are in Level 2 and only 10 members are allowed to gather at church. Some church ministries will be run from the church auditorium through Zoom. Those who come to church are urged to take precaution and keep yourself and your fellow believers safe. Please observe strict hygiene when at church. If you have any flu like symptoms please do stay home.

QUESTION FOR MEMBERS:

HOW DID YOU SEE GOD IN THIS PANDEMIC?

Ragulan Lingaraja has responded to this above question. Please do find his testimony on the last page. **The question is still open for another month. We encourage you to share your story of how the Lord was with you in the midst of this pandemic**

CHAIN PRAYER WEEK:

These times demand persistent prayers. The Tamil Congregation had a Chain Prayer last week and all members participated in it. There will be more such Chain Prayer Ministries in the coming days. Members are encouraged to participate in prayer.

UPCOMING EVENT:

MEMORY VERSE COMPETITION: SATURDAY, 6th October

PLEASE CONTACT PASTORS FOR PRAYER NEEDS

PASTOR GRACE'S COLUMN:**To See What Jesus Sees**

Dear church, brothers and sisters, let us give thanks to the Lord who blesses us every single day with peace and joy. Many sad things have happened since the start of 2020 and continue to happen. Many people are living in fear, asking God why he lets all these things happen. I have asked this question as well. God has a plan and purpose for all of us and he teaches us not to use our own eyes to see the world but to learn to see the world through His eyes.

Everything is in God's hands and He is the eternal creator. God created the angels first though he knew they will betray Him. However, he did not destroy them at all, instead, He drove them to the ground with love and mercy. Then God created Adam and Eve, giving them free will to show the glory of God. But they again made mistakes and were punished to experience suffering, life, and death on earth. Throughout history, people continued to make mistakes and be heavily punished by God until Jesus came to redeem mankind through His suffering, crucifixion and overcoming death with life.

In God's mind, we are not only here as tools for his plan, but also living vessels for God's eternal plan. God wants to break down the barrier between our selfish wills and His divine will. We need to be willing and give our lives to God to achieve the plan He has already prepared for us.

God's plan is for each of us to be saved, to overcome and share eternal life with Him. God is the beginning and the end. He knew that man would sin before he created Adam and Eve. God called people out through visions and fulfilled His plans through these people. God has created and chosen each and everyone one of us specifically for His plan. The grace of God was given to us through the death and life of Christ for eternity. As Paul writes "according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Ephesians 3:11)

Brothers and sisters, God has a plan for us all and his plan will be achieved no matter how difficult and dangerous they may seem. Let us live in the embrace of our Lord and see the world through the eyes of Jesus.

Prayer Request

I want to give thanks to God for His continued grace over our sister Lily. Also, I want to thank our family at OCBC church for all the continued prayers for her health. Our God is wonderful, she has recently completed her treatment and the results are great by God's amazing grace. Please continue to pray for her and her family as she faces the persisting side effects from the treatment. We pray that the Lord has mercy on her suffering and commands authority to remove the physical discomfort.

Announcements

We will be continuing online services through Zoom until further notice.

Chinese worship service: Sunday 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Bible Study: Friday 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Discipleship Class: Wednesday 8:00 PM-9:30 PM (New set commencing 9th Sept)

Alpha Class: Commencing from the second week of September and running for 15 weeks.

PASTOR MIKE'S COLUMN**Encouragement from the Prophet Jeremiah - by Pastor Mike.**

There are some times in life where we just have to make the best of what we can do in a bad situation. During the days of the Prophet Jeremiah, Jerusalem had basically been invaded and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and his mighty army.

Most of the population were taken captive by the army and marched all the way back to Babylon, where they would have to stay for 70 years. Not only were the Jews under the discipline of the Babylonians, more than that they were under the discipline of Almighty God. But that didn't mean Jeremiah had to stop doing his ministry! Now, more than ever, the people were willing to listen to the Prophet.

In Jeremiah chapter 29, we read that the Prophet wrote letters to the Jews in captivity...

“These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.” - Jeremiah 29:1

Jeremiah tells the Jews in Babylon to build houses and plant gardens, to marry and have children, and to “seek the peace of the city” in which they were living. (29:6-7). In a general sense, Jeremiah was telling the people how to make the best of a bad situation!

Verse 11 has one of the Bible's great promises: ***“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” - Jeremiah 29:11***

This promise gives 3 great assurances of the character of God for us.

1. The first assurance is the *omniscience* of God. He says “I know the plans I have for you.” God knows everything, he knows all about you, and even during the hard times in life, His plans and purposes for you as a follower of Jesus Christ, don't change. So let us also maintain to stay close to God.

2. The promise also shows us the *beneficence* of God, that is His kindness. He says “My plans are of peace, not of evil.” God's plan for His people is good. Indeed the Book of Romans tells us that ***“All things work together for good, for them who love God and are called according to His purpose.”*** So always remember the goodness of the Lord.

3. Thirdly this promise shows us God's *transcendence*. This means that God sees what we don't see, and does what we can't do. God knows the future. So let us trust our future into the hands of our loving Lord!

Now look at this amazing statement that God gave Jeremiah to write:

“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.” - Jeremiah 29:12-13

This is how God wants His people to make the best of a difficult situation and to be strengthened in faith and trust for the Lord...call upon the Lord, come and pray to Him for He will hear you, in seeking Him you will find Him...when we do so with all our heart!

These truths do not change according to changing situations in our lives, they are always true, because God is always true to who He is. What sure and steadfast confidence that we can have in our God, the God of the Bible.

God bless.

RAGULAN LINGARAJA

Moving Forward

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! I thank God for making me & my family to stand as a testimony of the work of His hands.

The sudden closure of international borders and the country-wide lockdown raised uncertainty on my studies, my finances and my family who were stuck overseas. My wife was due for her 2nd delivery in May and the thought that I could not be with her during those times haunted me every day & night ever since the border closure. I had only few months left to save the required funds for my visa, which went for a toss with the lockdown. There were no one to support my elderly parents back at their place. These uncertainties weakened me and I doubted myself if I would be able to complete my studies. But! I believed in God at all times that He is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that I could ask or even think off. I trusted what ever situation I am in today is not a mistake of His hands and believed He has greater plans for us. Everyday whenever I was weak, I used to sing *"He did not bring us out this far to take us back again"* and *"Giants, do die. The bigger they are, the harder they fall"*, believing in Him that He is bigger than my needs and the problems around me.

I told God what my concerns were and He helped us move forward above and beyond in everything that I asked for. At the end of the first week of lockdown, my employer called me and informed that he will pay me in full even though would be paid lesser through the subsidy. Also to my surprise, my hourly wage was increased to a higher rate which I had not asked for or even thought about. My parents wanting to help me decided to take a loan. I was unhappy to burden them and prayed hoping our God would meet our needs through other ways. Though my father was not eligible for wage subsidy, through faith my mother submitted an application on his behalf and prayed for a 200% increase of funds than what he was eligible. Our Lord was kind! As we read in John 6, not only was the people filled but also the disciples were able to take an excess of the blessing. Our Lord granted us 200% more than what my mother had prayed for, which not only was above and beyond my requirements, but also yielded an excess amount for my parents. When I submitted my visa this month, God helped me to show funds higher than what I had wished before the pandemic.

The Lord was our stronghold. He protected my father everyday at his work. As a newsdealer, he worked all day during the pandemic without a day's break. Yet our Lord did not let any pestilence to stalk him day or night. In spite of hospitals being closed and refusing to take admission for my wife's delivery, our Lord showed us way at the right time and kept us moving forward. Amidst this perilous time, God blessed us with another daughter. Even when situations turned against us, He gave my wife immense strength to endure the pain all by herself and manage both our children during these tough times. Though they were many people around the neighbour hood and my in laws being tested positive for Covid, our Lord kept my wife and our household under His wings and protected them. With extensive support and prayers from the Church and the elders, our Lord helped me in finishing my studies and fulfilling His purpose of bringing me to this land. When I look back the ways He has led us through, I couldn't be without thanking Him for all His wondrous works of His hands. Even an unprecedented pandemic could not devour what the Lord had set forth for us. I humble myself before Him, for it was not me, but He, would made all things possible and kept us moving forward.

In Christ,

Ragulan Lingaraja

BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU AND WILL KEEP YOU WHEREVER YOU GO, AND WILL BRING YOU BACK TO THIS LAND; FOR I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU UNTIL I HAVE DONE WHAT I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU. GENESIS 28:15